

THE NEWS LETTER

OF THE COLLEGE ENGLISH ASSOCIATION

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DECEMBER, 1943

Our Literary Standards

An Open Letter from
Miss Dorothy Thompson

Dear Editor:

What a question you unroll! As you probably know, I am in many ways a conservative regarding education. I believe we are rapidly becoming an illiterate nation, in the sense that our people have utterly inadequate vocabularies and use words without any attempt at precision. Since no one can think except with words or with numbers, the poverty of vocabulary and lack of precision result in blurred thinking.

But I do not know the answer. I believe that the home environment has more influence upon the child than the school. Children who come from homes where English is well spoken and good books plentiful and discussed are sensitive to language. Nowadays no young people read as they did a generation ago, when books were the chief recreation. How can anyone master a language he reads only in newspapers or hears in moving pictures or on the radio, where a conscious attempt is made to reduce language to the level of the broadest masses? Children brought up with parents who have a large and flexible vocabulary and make no concession to the children beyond explaining the meaning of a word when the child demands it, invariably have good vocabularies themselves. They are constantly challenged to widen their knowledge of words, if they want to be included in the conversation. But children who learn from newspapers and movies never move beyond that level. Books no longer appeal to them as stimulation. The movies and the radio are a substitute and an anodyne.

All the little things that imply respect for language are neglected—such as hand-writing, and voice culture. I am convinced that there is a direct connection between precise penmanship and precise speaking. There is certainly a connection between neatness in the things of the hand, and neatness in the thoughts of the brain. There is a connection between the sound of language and the meaning of language. The vulgar voice uses easily vulgar words. We do not adequately educate children in language—in its structure, for instance—nor do we cultivate them in language. We do not develop sufficient taste.

The neglect of the classics—of Latin and Greek—results in weak structural foundations for a knowledge of English. People use words without any sense of their genealogy.

In the controversy between old books and new books, I am inclined to the view that the old ones are

(Continued on Page 3)

IS THERE ANY SUCH THING AS Engineering English? . . . Army English? . . . Navy English?

I am very much interested in the request that you sent concerning "Engineering English." It is a matter we have discussed many times, with a definite feeling that the phrase or something similar should be kept. We look at it first from the standpoint of motivation, because we present the problems in writing English from the standpoint of the practical use by professional engineers. We use the phrase, secondly, because of a specialized vocabulary that is necessary in writing about engineering or any of its branches. We use it in the third place because of certain trends in style; for example, the frequent use of abbreviations and the frequent writing of numbers or other measurements. Finally, we believe there is a peculiar need for an exact description when machines or instruments are involved, differing from the imaginative or suggestive description of places or concepts. We always make it clear to the students that there is only one set of grammatical rules and one standard usage for punctuation and other elements of composition. We would prefer the expression "English for Engineers" to the expression "Engineering English," and I suppose the parallel application to other professional groups would be followed.

Karl O. Thompson,
Case School of Applied Science.

Except for what is called in technical jargon "practice effect" in special forms of writing—for example, business letters—there is little justification for the multiplication of the many kinds of English you mention, such as "Engineering English," "Army English," and other similar captions. We have, of course, substantial offerings in such courses partly because of student and partly because of faculty demand, but the Department at Lehigh is really interested in Good English, which means, of course, English appropriate to any occasion.

Students of A and B grade rarely elect these specialized courses. They know better, for they realize that a semester of drill in technical or business forms is for them a waste of time. The numerous C, D, E, and F students, however, who firmly believe in "practical" education, do their best when writing in forms applicable immediately to the business and technical work in which they expect to engage upon graduation.

The department staff knows better than to divulge any unfaith-

to our scientific and business colleagues or to try to convince them that there is no inherent magic in Engineering English, Technical Writing, Business Letter Writing, Technical Report Writing, et cetera. Once it became known that under all these captions we were teaching, as in the freshman year, some more Good English, the students who come to these courses in droves by compulsion or election would vanish—and where then would Department enrollment be in universities largely devoted to training for science and business? In other words these captions are valuable expedients (to use your term) to impress those professors who dwell in the land of Philistia and worship the Idols of the Market place. These colleagues can always be relied upon to applaud such courses as "great stuff." Those, however, who dwell outside Philistia send their students instead to popular courses like World Literature or Biographies of Great Men.

We have admiration for the courage of another University still teaching Plato and Lyric Poetry to A.S.T.P. Engineers. As Morley intimated, when recommending Chaucer as required reading for Generals—Plato and Lyric Poetry may prove of greater service than "Army" or "Navy" English. I recall one of our drafted instructors who whiled away a long night of guard duty by reciting all the verses he could remember. He said, "They just lasted through."

Robert M. Smith,
Lehigh University.

I am pleased to accede to your request for a few comments on the use of the term "Engineering English."

For many years I suffered severe pains in the cervical region because of the expression "Engineering English." Eventually I became used to it (though I still have occasional twinges) and now accept it with a cynical grin.

I don't believe there is any such thing as Engineering English any more than there is Plumber's English, Surgeon's English, Baker's English, Butcher's English et al. The expression is merely a good sales tag, an attempt to fool the student, to entice him to reluctant study under the impression that he is getting something peculiar to the engineers. It is just a psychological trick.

It is really only a matter of vocabulary, of using the engineer's jargon. Essentially there is no difference. Good English is good Eng-

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Definitions of Democracy

You remember the exchange of ideas on the subject of courses in Democratic Traditions in American Literature? Here is a series of definitions written in the course I gave, for the first time, last term. You may be interested in the vitality of student thought which they show. The class numbered about 30 students, and there were about ten men in it, eight of whom were either V-12 or NROTC. The last definition, in the acrostic pattern, was written by a V-12 student.

—T. M. Pearce,
University of New Mexico.

"I cannot think of 'Democracy' in terms of merely political freedom. Whether or not you have a voice in your government does not mean much when one-third of a nation cannot sustain that voice. Economic freedom is not only a partner of political freedom but a pre-requisite."

"Democracy is an agency of the people which is used not only to govern them but also to help by education and insurance against accident and poverty."

"Democracy is a faith—faith in the representatives of the people to work out the best system for their political, social and economic equality."

"Democracy is, most important of all, the right to live, live as human beings; the right to freedom of speech, press, and the freedom to go forward and onward as time goes on."

"Democracy is a state in which the people serve themselves and each other; it implies social cooperation as well as equal opportunity and individual freedom."

"To me, democracy is a personal thing. It is the writings of great men like Emerson and Whitman, the deeds of Washington and Lincoln, the right to worship, to say, to follow tiny causes I may choose; the right to vote, to criticize, to admire; the security of our land, the faith in our people and their philosophy, humor and sympathy."

D—duty to country
E—emancipation of all people
M—minorities have no fear
O—official people's choice
C—courage to progress
R—representation (equal)
A—authority vested in the people
C—Crosby can start out as a small time singer and finish by being a millionaire
Y—"Yanks" are defending this thing called Democracy."

THE NEWS LETTER

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Weather Report

Rising temperatures due to partial eclipse of liberal arts; regaining normal after eclipse has passed. Severe wind storms rising in the east from Columbia Heights and in the middle west from Chicago Midway; threatened disturbances due to rise of semantics well above the horizon gradually quieting. Progressive Education moving on from eastern seaboard centering over prairie states causing modified hurricane manifestations. Sun spots due to army and navy trainees. Project-method-in-education disturbs lesser planets in their courses. Settled weather inevitable, but somewhat delayed. Cooler.

Editorial!

This is a friendly and also a respectful bow to our younger contemporary "The Explicator" published in Fredericksburg, Virginia, and edited by G. W. Arms, J. P. Kirby, L. G. Locke and J. E. White-sell. We have before us a bound copy of Volume I, just completed. Each issue of this monthly periodical is eight leaves in length (leaves, because each page is printed only on one side for greater convenience of clipping and filing). The bound volume has approximately seventy-two leaves similarly made up with alternate blank pages. The title is taken from Dryden's line, "The last verse is not yet sufficiently explicated." It is this condition of many last lines, as well as first and intervening ones, that the editors wish to remedy. They say for themselves, "our purpose is to provide a clearing house for explication-de texte." They hope the leaflets will prove of value in College English courses, believing that the honest instructor cannot answer every question he asks himself about the text and

may therefore send in his query, or chance upon the answer in these convenient pages. Among its contributors there are such names as William Rose Benet, Louise Boas, Robert Gay, T. O. Mabbott, John H. Roberts and many others, including the editors. Bound volumes are to be had for \$1.25, and unbound at \$1.00, by writing Box 1247 College Station, Fredericksburg, Virginia. Such a scholarly experiment deserves a lift.

Members of CEA who receive requests for biographical sketches to be published in some forthcoming biographical dictionary or "Who's Who" or "History of Education in Siwash County" are advised to examine carefully the wording on the form provided for the purpose. It sometimes happens that these forms include a promise on the part of the signer to accept and pay for a copy of the published work. Any signature certifying to the correctness of the material submitted or the printed proof received, may serve also as his signature to a promise to buy.

There are a few biographical compilations which make no such effort to compel the contributor to become a subscriber. These generally have a better reputation for accuracy and discrimination.

While we are on the subject, it is appropriate to point out that prizes offered in literary competitions may be placed in two classes: one group requires each competitor to make a payment in order to enter the competition; the other makes no such demand. A choice between the two should be obvious.

Among the first group, the "ante" sometimes takes the form of a required subscription to a magazine, or the purchase of a package of some manufactured goods, and the enclosing of a label with the submitted manuscript. The law recognizes this as a form of gambling in many cases, and requires the one who conducts the prize competition to say that a "facsimile" of the label may be offered as a substitute. But no one competing for a prize offered by Oatsie Toasties ever felt that it was advisable to send a pencilled copy of the label on the box, instead of a real label.

As to a new name for this pillar of erudition: a member from Swathmore says "One of the most time-honored but recently neglected names for American newspapers is gazette and The Gazette of the College English Association would not be bad. The Standard Dictionary defines the word as an official London government publication 'Containing lists of bankrupts, dissolution of partnerships, and announcements of honors, promotions, and appointments.'"

Brooklyn College writes "Why can't we change our name to the CEA News Letter or the CEA Letter? Everyone refers to it in this way. This is an age of alphabetocracy and everyone knows what CEA means by this time."

From Michigan comes the suggestion "How about The College English Teacher?" New England

suggests The CEA Chap Book, with the added suggestion that when we issue other chap-books we call them Chap Book Supplements.

From Ohio Wesleyan University comes a generous collection of proposals, as follows:

Town Meeting
Bulletin Board
College English Exchange
English Ledger
Pro and Con
College English Blue Pencil
Around the Board (Feast of Reason and Flow of Soul)
Village Post Office
Metropolitan Post Office

To those of our more serious-minded members who thought that the exclamation "O Tempora, O Moses" in our Nov. issue was a typographical error and have hastened to call the editor's attention to it, he sends his devoutly expressed wish that they may continue thinking it an error.

The announcement of Professor Richardson's contemplated resignation, published in our November issue, has brought comforting evidence of the readiness of members to serve in emergency. Five thus far have volunteered, from California to Tennessee. The first offer came from Professor Jess H. Jackson, Head of the Department of English at the College of William and Mary. Mr. Jackson offers to serve for a time, and he will have the advantage of experienced clerical assistance. When he has done his bit, there is reassurance in the knowledge that others stand ready to relieve him.

Merely An Anecdote

Reading Leo Gurko's comment in the October News Letter on the vanishing of "our light romantic lady novelists," I am myself moved to comment on which were the more widely read or the longer lived of those departed entertainers. The most popular of them all in this century was probably that profic lady, Harold Bell Wright. Pressing her close, though, was the far more venturesome female, Zane Gray, while in the allied field of versified narrative the outstanding poetess, not yet forgotten, was Robert Service. . . . A year or so ago the scholarship committee in the coeducational institution where I teach was dealing with the records of delinquent freshmen. Four per cent of the first-year men were in trouble, one third of one per cent of the first-year women. Said the chairman, shuffling the record cards together, "Well, we seem to have a good many weak sisters this year."

Edith Mirrieles,
Stanford University.

Enclosed with this issue of the News Letter is a ballot sheet which members are urged to fill out promptly and mail to the Secretary. Among the questions is that of a more distinctive name for this publication. Comments may be added as to the 1000-word limitation imposed upon our contributors.

"To End a Sentence With"

It is said that an official in the OPA in Washington sent a proposed order to the legal department to learn if it complied with the law. After an unreasonably long time the order was returned with no comment on its legality, but with sarcastic comment on the fact that several sentences ended in prepositions. The official thus criticized replied, "Your remarks about my ending my sentences with prepositions is one of the things up with which I do not intend to put."—Advance.

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Our Literary Standards

(Continued from Page 1)

more reliable, because they have stood the test of time. But even this wants considerable qualification. Some books still required reading in some schools haven't stood the test of time, but only of school boards. I heard the other day that "The Mill on the Floss" is still required reading for English courses. A mediocre novel by a mediocre writer has, if this is true, stood the test of time in the schools alone. E. M. Forster's "Passage to India" is a newer book by an immeasurably better writer on an immeasurably more interesting theme, more nearly approaching timelessness, as Hamlet is a thousand times more in the modern mood than is "Mrs. Warren's Profession," or "The Importance of Being Ernest." Until we have teachers with surer discrimination about good literature and poor literature, meretricious books and true books, we had better, perhaps, stick to the old ones. But it is not an ideal solution.

It is impossible to engage in subtle and differentiated thought, without subtle and differentiated language. But the whole English-speaking world is creating its own basic English. It is doubtful, therefore, whether the educated and cultivated English linguist speaks the same language as the masses.

I do not know the solution. But I do know that the only way one can learn to read and write is by reading and writing. On the art of writing — an art I have never mastered to anything approaching my own satisfaction — I intend in my old age to write a textbook. For although I have not mastered the art, I believe I do understand much about the science, about, for instance, the relationship between form and content, and about the creative and seemingly magical properties in nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, sentence constructions and even punctuation as used in this way or that.

But that is another story, not to be told in a paragraph.

Sincerely yours,

Dorothy Thompson.

Page From an Unfinished-War Novel

After his Saturday morning class Professor Sallow picked up his brief case, dusted the chalk from his sleeve, and walked out of new Old North Hall (not to be confused by the alumni with old Old North) into the sunlight. He wanted to get downtown before the bank closed, and of course he couldn't take his car—on account of the gas situation.

Everybody said the gas shortage was getting pretty bad. Walking to class, rain or shine, was supposed to make him feel virtuous anyway. And Marcia said that stopping on the way home to pick up the marketing, and not forgetting the ration book, was another thing he was doing to help the war. Marcia was his wife. She talked to the woman next door a good deal about the Emergency. They were agreed that the Home Front situation was

awful tough any more, but that we must all be patriotic and keep a stiff upper lip. Marcia was always talking about points and saying how hard it was to plan meals. Take butter now . . . As he walked along, he knew he was indulging in petty thoughts, as he had been doing much too often of late. He was in a rut, he supposed. There was a big war going on, and he had no part of it—except a lot of students who soon would be in it: he wasn't "on the beam" or "in the groove;" he was in a rut . . .

"G'morning, Dr. Sallow—a voice interrupted him. A boy in a private's uniform walked past and grinned. A little yellow ribbon over his heart looked very new and bright in the sunlight. (Asiatic-Pacific theater of operations . . .) It was Lew Gorgas, home on furlough. "Gorgeous" the co-eds had called Lew just a year ago—Lew with his short, shoe-brush hair—and they had always giggled when, in class, he had said "unprepared"—as he usually was, then, in freshman English class . . . Where would Lew Gorgas be a year from now?

His own theater of operations, he reflected, would continue to be new Old North.

Every time he walked across the campus and down Center Street and saw young men in uniform, he became aware of a spiritual unrest which he found hard to put into words. Now, he said to himself, was the winter of his discontent. Being middle-aged wouldn't ordinarily get him down, but these days it was painful to realize what it signified to belong in the neither-old-or-young middle forties, the generation that had flourished between years. It was the generation of bald-headed and paunchy kibitzers at a football game, the impotent and futile fringe on the sidelines . . . Today he was actually on the sidelines not of a game but of an overwhelming struggle which was being fought to a finish with weapons that only the inmates of an insane asylum would select. His

own generation in its incredible stupidity had acquiesced in the development of these mad forces of totalitarianism now loose in the world, and such forces could be checked only by the younger generation, who had had no part in the creation of their inescapable tragedy. This was the idea he had developed in a recent commencement speech to a local high school.

Yes, it was the men of his age who should have been thrown into the struggle first. The statesmen and the politicians should have led their contemporaries into the fires, to burn (as their own sons were in fact burning, in the Pacific and in Italy) as punishment for their political and economic failure in the years between wars . . . Here was the root of the sickness of his spirit: What could he do, what could anyone of his age do, that was comparable to what the younger men had to do? No action or sacrifice, other than brave talk accompanied by futile gestures, seemed possible in modern warfare, the diabolical method his generation had devised to recapture the conditions of peace which it should never have relinquished in those years before. . . .

There were details that the historians of the future, painting the picture on the big canvas, would not include—in their desire to give the proper shade and color to the Major issues of World War II. Right now, those details were all that he could see in the troubled eye of his mind . . . the homesick draftee, the kid in the upper berth, bound for God knew where (with no return-trip ticket in his pocket) . . . figures in the mist, creeping through the green New Guinea forests with Japs like murderous monkeys in the trees, fixing their gun sights . . . bodies on the rubber raft, floating silent on the oily surface of the grey ocean. . . .

Professor Sallow had reached the bank. On the steps he was greeted by a colleague, who showed him

the computation of his salary-withholding tax. "We in the middle-income bracket are sure taking it on the chin!" he said . . . As Professor Sallow stepped inside, there was that war bond poster again: the soldier with the blood-stained bandage around his head, the soldier who gave you a sidelong look with narrowed eyes — "Doing all you can, . . . ?" Ten years from now, he wondered, would he be asking himself a similar question: "What were you waiting for, brother?"

—Thomas W. H. Blair,
Kent State Univ., Ohio.

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—R. ELLIS ROBERTS
in *The Saturday Review of Literature*

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*Around the curve of our distracted globe
The jolly Saint flies westward with the sun,
An old familiar carol on his lips.
Then down through clouds and smoke his glances probe
To look on weary troops, and bivouacs,
On sentry-posts near hidden jungle tracks,
On lonely atolls, and on convoyed ships.
And there below him, boys whose thoughts are bound
By pain and struggle and the fear of fear,
Catch the far gleam of candle-lighted spruce,
The smells of Christmas cooking, spiced and sweet,
And know the Saint is somewhere on his rounds,
And in that moment Darkness calls a truce.*

*Then memories are filled with little sounds,
The rustling of a tissue-covered gift—
A distant church-bell, laughter, dancing feet,
Remembered whispers—all the tones that drift
In from a street when passing friend greets friend.
If these, then, are the visions that they see,
The homey things remembered of us here,
They are the things that now we must defend,—
By closing up our circle 'round the tree,
And wishing all our friends a glad New Year.*

—B. J.

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Articles of Interest to English Teachers in Current Journals

Edited by Amy V. Hall,
Univ. of Washington

AMERICA Agar, Herbert, "The Price of Freedom" *Tomorrow*, September, 1943, 4-7; also Cohn, David, "Maturity, Stay Away from My Door" (pages 33-5)

Youthful America may become adult: realize that men are neither angels nor devils, be willing to pay the price, accept life's tragedy and become serene.

(Agar) Self-confident America is realizing that only international cooperation for effective security will win her peace and freedom.

AMERICA Jessup, John K., "America and the Future" *Life*, Sept. 13 and 20, 1943, 104 ff

I. Our Domestic Economy. A vigorous policy of freedom, to encourage millions of enterprising men, to stimulate productive investment, to attack monopolies, to keep a free market; thus, with aid of government fiscal power, to maintain employment.

II. Our Foreign Policy. A democratic policy, to secure our territory through armaments and a big-four agreement for peace, to promote prosperity through international trade and development, and to extend the principle of individual freedom through law.

POST-WAR AMERICA Hansen, Alvin H., "Wanted: Ten Million Jobs" *Atlantic*, September 1943, 65-9

After the war, what disposition will be made of the returned soldiers, and of the war workers? A statistical survey shows what types will be most needed.

EDUCATION Canby, Henry Seidel, "Ships Without Pilots" *Saturday Review*, Sept. 18, 1943, 18
Dam, Colby Dorr, "The Human Spirit Can Win the Peace" *Vital Speeches*, Aug. 15, 1943, 655-9

Jones, Howard Mumford, "Citizen or Mechanic?" *Saturday Review*, Sept. 18, 1943, 3, 26
Constructive living must be taught from the stored experience of literature, art, and history, by teachers who know the meaning of spiritual values.

EDUCATION Edwards, Violet, "The World's Greatest Educator" *Saturday Review*, Sept. 18, 1943, 7-9, 27

The eleven out of every fourteen able-bodied men who are enrolled in Uncle Sam's school will soon be receiving not only vocational and military training, but also courses in any high-school and college subjects they wish to undertake. Books for off-duty reading are sent them, also, by the thousands; slide-films as well are kept up to the minute.

EDUCATION "Engineering Education" *Journal of Engineering Education*, Sept., 1943, 26-46

Hammond, H. P., "The Past" (26-33)

Potter, A. A., "The Present" (34-40)

Compton, Karl T., "The Future" (41-6)

Three prominent deans concisely chart the course, stressing the unchanged essentials and noting changes in content and in method, earlier and yet to come.

EUROPE Guerard, Albert, "For a Federated Europe" *New Republic*, Sept. 6, 1943, 330-33

If the wrecked nationalism of Europe is restored, the old hatreds will revive. A European Commonwealth, on the other hand, would foster harmony through immediate common solutions of the most important and pressing needs.

FREEDOM Butler, Nicholas Murray, "What Does Freedom Mean?" *Vital Speeches*, Sept. 15, 1943, pp. 710-12

To the Four Freedoms must be added a fifth: Freedom of individual enterprise. Only through this can world-wide organization become successful, because based on voluntary cooperation.

GERMANY Soule, George, "What to Do with Germany" *New Republic*, Sept. 27, 1943, 413-15

Harsh treatment is essential at first, to impress the Germans and to forestall a terrible vengeance by the neighboring lands. Then, under strong international order, Germany may play her part.

"What Germany Needs" *Saturday Review*, Aug. 14, 1943.

The individuality of her people, long throttled, needs to be restored.

"How Must We Deal with Germany after the War, to Win the Peace?" *Town Meeting*, Oct. 14, 1943.

HEBREWS "Jewish Homeland. Palestine Wants a Million More Jews" *Life*, Oct. 11, 1943, 93-101

"The Crucifixion of a People" *Free World*, Sept., 1943, 196-8

A vigorous Jewish settlement in Palestine, on land purchased from the Arabs, is developing a cosmopolitan people, and introducing Western ways.

If Britain closes the doors of Palestine, millions of Jews will fall under the impending doom in Europe.

INDUSTRY "Labor-Management Committees," H. W. Steinkraus, *Vital Speeches*, Sept. 15, 1943, 726-8

Know-Why in War Job Training" *Survey Graphic*, September, 1943, 356 . . .

Increased production, as well as confidence and resourcefulness, result from fuller cooperation between management and labor. Stuart Chase, too, stresses this point ("Teaching Foremen That Workers Are People," Reader's Digest, September, 17-21).

JAPAN Eastlake, Clara, "The Japanese Character" *Tomorrow*, Sept., 1943, 43-6

Mears, Helen, "The Japanese Riddle" *Atlantic*, Sept., 1943, 100-6

Rosinger, Lawrence K., "What Future for Japan?" *Foreign Policy Report*, Sept. 1, 1943, 142-56

The first two explain the national traits of obedience and violence as the result of habitual repression. The third considers the best outcome both for the Japanese people and for the world.

TECHNICAL ARTICLES Desiderata of publishable papers, as seen by managing editor of McGraw-Hill semi-technical trade journal *Electronics*.

An outline of parts, as well as emphasis on organization, clarity, proportion, and adaptation to audience, with suggestions for illustration and proofreading, may please harried English instructors. Article is not itself smoothly written.

Dudley, Beverley. *Proceedings of the Institute of Radio Engineers*, v. 30, no. 12 (Dec., 1942), pp. 529-534. Leading article.

ELECTRICITY (power and radio) Tesla, Nikola.

Estimate of Tesla's polyphase system for power distribution, and his concepts of inductive coupling, tuned circuits, and capacitance secondary in high-frequency investigations. Good material for paper on Tesla or on early history of electrical engineering. Includes list of references, and photograph of Tesla.

Scott, Charles F., and Wheeler, L. P., "Nicola Tesla's Achievements in the Electrical Art" *Electrical Engineering*, v. 62, no. 8 (August, 1943), pp. 351-357.

WORLD AFFAIRS The Covenant of the League of Nations, *U. S. News*, Oct. 15, 1943, 32-5

David Lawrence presents the full text, with all amendments to date. He urges that the United States now make the League an effective instrument of international cooperation.

The leading article in *Current History* for October, "Quebec and Woodrow Wilson"

Quotes at some length from Wilson's speech of 1918 on the essential foundations of an enduring peace.

WORLD COOPERATION Wilbur, Ray Lyman, "The Human Family, Inc." *Vital Speeches*, Sept. 1, 1943, pp. 696-9

Along with greater unity of action, war has brought dangerous centralization of authority. Freedom will be lost, unless responsibility for both personal and group activity is accepted by the individual human being. Slowly, everywhere, men must develop through rational, moral, cooperation, under intelligent control and with respect for the dignity of the common man.

WORLD ECONOMICS "Feeding a Hungry World: Problem for the Allies" *U. S. News*, Sept. 24, 1943, 20

Staley, Eugene, "Economic Aspects of Relief and Rehabilitation" *Vital Speeches*, Sept. 15, 1943, 730-4.

Essentials are (a) mobilization of all available resources, (b) efficient and equitable distribution, and (c) best, restoration of production and distribution systems ruined by the Axis. This last will restore morale.

WORLD PEACE Thomas, Norman, "Some Wrong Roads to Peace" *Vital Speeches*, Sept. 15, 1943, 720-22

Not imperialism, policing, or economic coercion will bring the peace for which our soldiers fight, but only intelligent and unforced cooperation of the peoples of the world.

LATIN AMERICA Scully, Michael, "New Blood in Old Mexico" *Current History*, Sept., '43, 40

Some 25,000 refugees are bringing new life into Mexico's Farming, Commerce, Industry, and Culture.

LITERATURE Mann, Thomas, "The Two Fine Gentlemen" *Tomorrow*, Sept., 1943, 11-22

Joseph, while prisoner in Egypt, ministers to the chief butler and the chief baker, in disgrace because of an alleged attempt upon the life of Pharaoh. He is, however, forgotten by the shallow rogue who is later restored to royal favor.

PHILOSOPHY Morris, Charles, "Freedom or Frustration?" *Fortune*, Sept., 1943, 148 ff

Six attitudes are common in mankind: Dionysian and Promethean, Apollonian and Mohammedan, Christianity and Buddhism. America, characterized by the second, third, and fifth, may develop a combination of the best in all, integrating the potentialities of widely varying individuals.

RACE TENSION *Common Ground*, Autumn, 1943

Devoted largely to the standpoints of Northern and Southern whites and negroes.

McWilliams, Carey, "Race Tensions, Second Phase"

Martin, Louis, "Prelude to Disaster, Detroit"

McNickle, Darcy, "We Go On from Here"

McKenzie, Marjorie, "Together We Test Our Courage"

Walker, Margaret, "Growing Out of Shadow"

Smith, Lillian E., "Growing Into Freedom"

"The Negro Press on the Riots"

RACE TENSIONS "Race Riots—Segregated Slums" "Race Prejudice—Social Immaturity" *Current History*, Sept., 1943, 30-4, 35-9

A sociologist and a psychologist attempt explanation of a pressing social problem.

"The Negro Comes of Age in Industry" *Atlantic*, Sept., 54-60

Robert C. Weaver shows the need for careful management of post-war issues.

READING Cowley, Malcolm, "Books by the Millions" *New Republic*, Oct. 1, 1943, 482-5

After World War I, books were expensive, and were not often purchased. Today, the cheap editions are selling like wildfire. Pocket Books alone, in 1942, sold 20 million copies. The demand is increased by the book clubs, and notably by the armed forces. Mass Markets bring effective diffusion of culture; its creation is another matter.

RUSSIA *Asia and the Americas*, Sept., 1943, issue is devoted mainly to articles on Russia.

In "The Meaning of Russia's Nationalism" Maurice Hindus points out that care for the national feeling of the component groups has developed reciprocal loyalty. "The U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R.", pioneering nations, have much in common. "Russia, Major Power in Asia," concerns her vast industrial developments. "The Timurids," patriotic groups of children, have aided the war effort almost unbelievably. Pp. 513-38.

Indoctrination In Teaching

A reference in a recent article in The News Letter to the many new textbooks in English with the word "American" in the title raises the old question of indoctrination in teaching. We are constantly reminded by academic speakers and writers that teachers should keep clear of anything approaching propaganda and maintain an objective attitude towards all controversial subjects, being content with merely presenting the facts and encouraging the student to formulate his own opinions. This method, it is said, will train the student in what is essential to education — the ability to arrive at sound judgments.

There is indeed much to be said for this argument; and it is true that far too many teachers present their views in an opinionated manner that discourages the student from independent thought. But it is well to recognize that such objective teaching is an ideal that can never be fully realized in the classroom. For every teacher, being human, has opinions and convictions; and unless he is a very exceptional human being he cannot keep his views completely out of his expression of ideas, no matter how sincerely he tries to do so. What he can and should do, however, is to make sure that his views are founded not on prejudice but on reason, and that his students clearly perceive the rational basis of his attitudes. It is better for the student's development if the teacher frankly admits his convictions than if he unwittingly establishes irrational attitudes in the student in an attempt to be scientific and factual.

Most of us, if not all, are believers in the superiority of the American way of life over that of

the totalitarian regimes, and we can find many good reasons for our belief. This way of life of ours is now being put to the supreme test, and we teachers can help it triumph by giving our students, many of whom are being trained for war, a reasoned faith in what they are being asked to fight for and die for. Our profession can be held partially responsible for the present predicament of civilization insofar as it failed to inculcate a sense of social responsibility in the youth of our country in the period between the two world wars. We have no excuse for shirking our task now, when what that task is has become inescapably clear, nor in the critical years that will follow the present war. Let us not be ashamed to have convictions or afraid to express them. Let us only see to it that our convictions are good ones before we assume the privileges of the teacher.

Gilbert Macbeth,
Villanova College.

Pidgin English

Pidgin English is spoken over an area equal to about 1/5 of the earth's surface yet until this war only those wandering Americans who came to know the China coast and the Pacific Islands and the west coast of Africa had ever heard about it. Thirty million people speak it everyday.

This we have on the authority of Edgar S. Sayer of Toronto, Canada, who has for the first time in history attempted to provide an adequate handbook of Pidgin English for the use of Army Air Force and Navy personnel. The work is a volume 11½x9, bound in heavy paper and reproduced by photo offset process from typed pages, 101 of them; alternate pages are blank.

"Until I wrote this in 1939," says the author, "no book had ever been written upon the subject—probably because there are only a half a dozen authorities upon the subject living in the world. My first edition was sold out last week and the second is on the press. It covers the Pidgin English of Africa, China and the East, Blackfellows of Central and Northern Australia, New Guinea, Papua, the Solomons and the South Sea Islands generally.

Chinese Pidgin English is quite different from the Pidgin English of the Pacific Islands, and variations occur again when the West African is compared with that of the Islands or Australia.

An Australian blackfellow remarked about the Creator: "White fella big boss sittum longa sky top." A Chinese coolie told me this about our American God: "Melican Josman too muchee allee time top-side." His idea was our God seemed too remote from humanity.

Here is a little Pidgin English about you buying a copy:

Big Boss Feller:

Send em tri feller dollar, half em dollar, quick quick. Gubbmint post feller catchem, takum you feller. He come you no more properly let go. Paper yabber belonga white feller Sayer, he too much good, makum want sing sing alatieme.

Big paper yabber that one, him talk allasame longa me. Me look out long way, no see paper yabber long time, then white feller Sayer he sittum down puttem talk-talk longa paper. Now me glad inside allatieme. That book him proper fella.

LUBRA belong me, likeit big little bit.

You send Gubbmint walk-about fella quick quick, catchem words, help killum bad sulky Jap. You sendum dollar longa big feller hawk longa sky. Properly savee?

Brother belong white feller Sayer, GULLABOOLALLA.
(Australian Black)

Melican man:

Chop chop catchee bookee belongee master Sayer. My hav lookee upsides, lookie downsides, my look-see long time — my muchee muchee wakkee. No find Pidgin belongee China. Soon vally ploppa bookee master maky. My now plenty have got. You catchee ploppa book? Three piecee dollar, half piecee dollar. Can do? Chin Chin!

LI GOON (Chinese)

Interested persons may write Edgar S. Sayer, P. O. Box 552, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. He sells his book for \$3.50.

To Young Teachers In Service

(Extracts from a letter sent to Teacher-graduates)

I suppose that many of us who are still in classrooms feel that we are being cheated out of "the experience of a life-time." It is true that some of the teacher-soldiers will return to civilian life profoundly stirred and even changed, and that all will gain values of some sort in terms of teaching. On the other hand never have the teacher and the liberal arts tradition faced a greater challenge than now. The need for technical and spiritual guidance is such as to arouse every power and will to serve. Though living may seem to be reduced to lowest terms, it has not been simplified after all. And truth and beauty were never more essential than today.

Everywhere post-war committees are at work, planning new curricula. There will be a great temptation to make these curricula "practical." The virus of German practicality is at work in the blood of civilization. We say we shall be "realistic" hereafter. When we say that we are facing down grade. Salvation is to be found only on the heights. I think we in English have a peculiar responsibility in terms of the "best that has been said and thought in the world."

On the other hand this war experience is making us sense the urgency of our task, not only now but always. There isn't much time. Whatever we are to do for our students we must do now. Here on the Campus we are having this fact made daily more compelling: the accelerated course, four years in three; the uncertain attendance of freshmen, and occasionally sophomores, under the shadow of the draft; the 750 aviation cadets, who must achieve accuracy and clarity of observation and expression in

twenty classroom hours. There isn't much time. And we need to re-examine, and probably revise, our teaching techniques to meet the new urgency. It may not be a bad thing for us... Professional patter seems pretty trivial as compared with the struggle for survival. We are proud of what you are doing, and pray God that you may not have to do it indefinitely. There's going to be more to survival than just keeping alive, or even alive and free. And although English isn't likely to become the universal language, it will still be very important. Poetry, too, will be indispensable, in the days of reconstruction.

—Frank Prentice Rand,
Mass. State College.

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Is There Any Engineering English?

(Continued from Page 1)

lish under any circumstances, whether one is writing a story or a poem, a report on the weather in Squeedunk, the corn crop in Podunk, or the progress of the production of steel or plastics.

But the average student of engineering is likely to feel that he is really getting something if he is asked to write an account of an experiment in Chemistry or Physics; he is likely to feel he is wasting his time if asked to write a description of a sunset. As a matter of fact he would be training his powers of observation and ability to write at either task. But to the student the one would be really practical; the other literary gush, or even worse, it might seem sissy.

If a student of engineering could learn to write a good report on, say, the housing conditions in his native town, or really to see and describe a house or a boat, he ought to be able to see and describe a machine or write a good report on how something is done or made. A student who learns to write well through one medium should be able to write equally well, always provided he has the necessary knowledge of and command of his data, through any other medium.

No, strictly speaking, there is no such thing as "Engineering English." The only difference lies in the terms used, and that goes in all divisions of knowledge.

—Arthur J. Weston, Chairman,
Department of Humanities,
Stevens Inst. of Technology.

You ask whether there are such things as "Navy English," "Engineering English," or "Business English." The answer, like the answer to every important question, is no and yes.

If you mean whether there is a separate kind of English governed by laws different from those applying to other forms of English, the answer is no. All good writing is of a kind, and functions in the same way. In a sense, we learn to write advertising copy from reading, among other things, the great poets; and when we are wise enough, we may learn something about writing great poetry from reading advertising copy. Some of us have never discovered this fundamental unity of all good writing. I discovered it some years ago when I signed up to give an extension course in writing, and found that some of those who had registered wanted to write aubades and some wanted to write advertisements. Before the course was over, I found that the aubade people and the advertising people were using the same principles. The two groups helped each other out.

On the other hand, if by "Engineering English" you mean whether people who are going to be engineers should be taught to adapt the principles of good writing to the kind of things they will write as engineers, the answer is plainly yes. If we drill students in the principles of good writing, the exceptionally agile minded will adapt

these principles to the engineering reports they write later. The vast majority will never realize that the principles apply to anything but daily themes.

When a teacher says there is no such thing as "Engineering English," or "Business English," or "Navy English," sometimes—not always, mind you—but sometimes what is meant is this. "I'm not interested in engineering, or business, or the navy. Must I go to the work and pains of finding out what these students are going to write and how it's done?" This, despite the fact that most teachers subscribe to the thesis that education should prepare for life. Too often, however, we wish to pick the particular segment of life in which we are interested. Thus the teacher with a frustrated desire to be a preacher, wishes to teach literature for its ethical content; the teacher with a frustrated desire to be an economist, interprets everything in terms of the dismal science; the teacher with a frustrated desire for the political arena goes in heavily for training for citizenship. Those who are just plain frustrated, go in for something they call "the humanistic tradition". Yet every student who comes to us will go out to write some specialized forms, a task for which he will be unprepared unless we train him.

Here's the situation as I see it. Engineering curricula have "theory" courses and "applied courses." Courses in literature and writing are the "theory courses" in an English Department. Courses in reports, business correspondence, Navy letters, social letters, and the like, are the "applied" courses.

If you want the applied courses to be effective, the ratio probably should be twenty-five per cent applied courses, and seventy-five per cent theory courses.

—Homer H. Nugent,
Rensselaer Polytechnic Inst.

"The term "Engineering English," as commonly used, is obviously a misnomer. Any course in English especially designed for engineering students should bear the title of "English for Engineers."

"With the exception of special emphasis on certain topics, English for Engineers is no different than English for any other profession. Such subjects as clarity, conciseness and simplicity should be emphasized, but again, these are necessary for correct expression in any profession."

Jesse R. Morgan,
Colorado School of Mines.

Other contributions to this discussion, crowded out of this issue, will appear in January. Members are invited to contribute comments dealing more directly with the question of "content" of English courses offered technical students and those training for the armed services. All contributors to our January issue are urged to mail their copy to the editor immediately after receipt of this issue, delayed because of war-time emergencies.

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